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**PROGRAMME PLANNING: COUNTRY AND INTERCOUNTRY
PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS**

FIFTH COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR CAMEROON

Note by the Administrator

I. THE PREPARATORY PROCESS

1. The fifth country programme for Cameroon (1992-1996) is the result of a programming exercise that began with an in-depth evaluation of the fourth country programme (1987-1991). The evaluation noted that in an attempt to adapt to the worsening economic situation, the programme had spread its limited resources too thinly to cover 47 projects, thus limiting programme impact. It was also discovered that more extensive consultations with United Nations agencies and the donor community, as well as more efficient coordination by the Ministry of Planning, would have greatly improved programme quality.

2. The results of the evaluation and the orientation for the fifth country programme were discussed with the line ministries involved in programme implementation, agencies of the United Nations system and other bilateral and multilateral donors using as the main frame of reference the Government Statement of Development and Economic Recovery Strategy issued in 1989. At the same time, consultations were undertaken within the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) to streamline the programming exercise. Three main sectors were selected by the Government for United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) intervention during the fifth country programme, namely, economic management, the promotion of small- and medium-scale enterprises and industries and the protection and management of the environment.

3. The consultations also brought issues of human development to the forefront, and a UNDP-sponsored study was conducted in December 1990 on human development in Cameroon covering the 1970-1990 period. A major conclusion of this study was that the deteriorating human development situation, characterized by regional and sectoral growth disparities, was likely to worsen significantly if the Government did not take urgent economic policy measures that were compatible with adjustment needs.

4. UNDP-sponsored preparatory sectoral missions on small- and medium-scale enterprises and the environment, as well as a United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)-related national seminar on the environment in Cameroon, were organized in December 1991 to assist in determining requirements and modalities for a multidisciplinary programming exercise. The management of this consultation process by the Government and the full involvement of bilateral and multilateral donors will greatly enhance the Government's capacity to manage donor inputs in these sectors in line with the ongoing national technical cooperation assessment and programme (NATCAP) process.

5. The fifth country programme is built on the judicious use of very limited indicative planning figure (IPF) resources and conceived basically as a catalyst to guarantee maximum impact and increase government involvement in the implementation process.

II. ANALYTICAL COMMENTARY ON THE FIFTH COUNTRY PROGRAMME

6. The deep economic recession that prevailed during the fourth country programme has persisted into the fifth programme and is characterized by a continuous fall in gross domestic product (GDP) since 1986, a substantial balance of payments deficit, an accumulation of external and internal debt, rising unemployment fueled by massive lay-offs and a freeze on public service recruitment. The production of the main export crops registered record declines in the 1989-1990 agricultural season, ranging from 1 per cent for cocoa to 37 per cent for coffee and cotton.

7. Within this context, the Government set as its most urgent priorities the stabilization of public finances and adopted a Structural Adjustment Programme. To this effect the statement of development and economic recovery strategy was issued in May 1989 outlining the Government's efforts to revive the economy and encourage balanced development in the future. The second phase of the Structural Adjustment Programme is currently being negotiated.

8. The major components of the economic recovery strategy are:
(a) stabilizing public finances in the medium term; (b) improving public investment programming, budgeting and monitoring; (c) improving civil service productivity; and (d) fostering institutional reforms.

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9. The three themes to be addressed by the fifth country programme for Cameroon - economic management, the promotion of small- and medium-scale enterprises and protection and management of the environment - adequately reflect the fundamental concerns of the Government as reflected in its Statement of Development and Economic Recovery Strategy.

10. Economic management issues will be addressed through joint efforts with regional and other initiatives such as Long-Term Perspective Studies, the Management Development Programme (MDP) and the recently launched NATCAP exercise which will be actively pursued in 1992. An important feature of UNDP intervention in this area in the fifth country programme will be the technical cooperation provided to the Ministries of Planning and Public Service to create the capacity needed to manage the technical cooperation process and help implement the Government's recovery strategy. The fifth programme will also provide technical cooperation to improve productivity in the public service and thus help bring about much needed reform through improved budget planning and management of the Government's resources.

11. While support for small- and medium-scale enterprises constitutes a key element of the Government's private sector strategy, policy weaknesses in this area represent a major risk of failure. These weaknesses have been manifested through poor subsectoral coordination and lack of training and technological, organizational and managerial support, all of which affect private sector competitiveness. UNDP activities during the fifth country programme will help promote an enabling environment. A programme approach aimed at addressing these key weaknesses as well as undertaking strategic interventions will stimulate private sector activities. Emphasis will be placed on agricultural, industrial and commercial small- and medium-scale enterprises and on institutional capacity both for coordination and for resource mobilization. Important reference tools in this respect will be the Industrial Development Master Plan elaborated during the third and fourth country programmes and the ongoing cooperative sector reform programme.

12. UNDP intervention in the area of environmental protection and management will deal mainly with policy at the community and national level. Policy dialogue has already been initiated, through a UNDP/United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) programming mission between the Government and interested donors. In line with the programme approach, the first step will be to assist the Government in setting up an environmental policy framework and action plan with emphasis on the required technical and institutional capacity to coordinate the numerous activities currently being implemented in this area. UNDP will link its actions with such ongoing multilateral and bilateral initiatives as UNCED and the Global Environment Facility. The policy framework and action plan will also permit cohesion and a better integration of United Nations and other donor cooperation, such as the UNSO anti-desertification plan of action.

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13. The programme addresses directly five of the six areas of focus designated by Governing Council decision 90/34 of 23 June 1990. Poverty eradication and grass-roots participation in development will be addressed by the promotion of agricultural small- and medium-scale enterprises at the grass-roots level through a revived and revamped cooperative movement and through commercial group farms. In this regard, ongoing programmes to adapt simple food transformation technologies will be strengthened to form the basis for village-level agricultural enterprises. Environmental problems and natural resource management constitute an area of concentration. Management development will be addressed by the economic management theme which aims, among other things, to strengthen the Government's Public Service and Planning Ministries through the ongoing NATCAP exercise and the MDP. Assistance to the Government outside the three areas of concentration will include the strengthening of an ongoing women and food technology programme. At the same time, during programme formulation, in close collaboration with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), women's concerns will be addressed, especially in the area of agricultural small- and medium-scale enterprises where women constitute over 70 per cent of the farming population.

14. UNDP strategy to promote human development concerns during the fifth country programme will consist mainly of helping the Government organize nationwide dialogue on the findings of the Human Development Report 1991 and continue efforts to incorporate human development concerns into the Government's economic recovery strategy. UNDP intervention in the area of economic management during the fifth country programme will also seek to include the findings and recommendations of this study within the Government's management development initiatives, especially those designed to improve budget planning and implementation.

15. In response to other issues of global concern, the fifth country programme will enable UNDP to serve as a catalyst for government and donor initiatives in response to the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) pandemic, while government education programmes presently envisaged as a follow-up to the World Conference on Education for All will receive the joint support of UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank through the promotion of basic education.

III. MANAGEMENT OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

16. The adoption of the programme approach by the Government should enable greater impact to be attained with limited UNDP resources. A major thrust of the fifth country programme for Cameroon is the strengthening of the Government's capacity to manage national programmes, including the entire aid coordination process with the NATCAP exercise as the starting point. In this broad context, national execution will be raised considerably from the 11 per cent level attained during the fourth country programme. Increased use will also be made of national experts, United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

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17. With regard to the two programmes for which the full programme approach is envisaged, namely, the promotion of small- and medium-scale enterprises and the protection and management of the environment, there will be an urgent need to establish coherent policy frameworks. In this respect steps have been taken to ensure that detailed programme formulation by multidisciplinary missions be a government-managed process from the outset. Participatory systems of management and control for the two programmes (e.g., steering committees) will be established. In addition, government capacity to monitor and evaluate the programme will be strengthened.

18. The programmes for small- and medium-scale enterprises and environmental protection will be monitored through programme progress reports and evaluations. The third theme - economic management - and other project activities of the programme will carry on existing monitoring and evaluation procedures. A mid-term review and an end-of-cycle in-depth evaluation will also take place. Key officials at the Ministry of the Plan and Regional Development in the Office of the Prime Minister are receiving special briefings and attending workshops on the programme approach, the NATCAP process and national execution. The implementation of the NATCAP exercise during the first year of the programme will provide the Government with the technical tools needed for coordination. Informal sectoral consultations between United Nations agencies and other donors will be actively pursued to facilitate and complete the Government's coordination efforts.

IV. RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

19. The fifth country programme for Cameroon addresses key concerns of the Government in its efforts to fight the prevailing deep economic recession, as well as fundamental issues of global concern, as designated by Governing Council decision 90/34. It focuses on sustainable human development, with national capacity-building as an implementation strategy.

20. The Administrator recommends that the Governing Council approve the fifth country programme for Cameroon.
